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ABSTRACT

Colleges with sizable teacher education programs must demonstrate the legitimacy and usefulness of all kinds of educational media and technology. Students and faculty in such colleges need readily available educational media selection centers, which may be considered expanded curriculum laboratories, to help them become familiar with the materials. Assistance needed in selecting materials for the centers may be provided by referrals from information clearinghouses such as ERIC, or by the National Laboratory System (NLS) proposed by committees of the National Book Committee. The NLS, as a network of educational media centers, should also provide selection and evaluation criteria and cataloging of nonprint media compatible with that of Library of Congress. Colleges should provide active leadership in the NLS program. (LS)

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"EDUCATIONAL MEDIA SELECTION CENTERS AND ACADEMIC LIBRARIES"

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RELATING THE EDUCATIONAL MEDIA SELECTION CENTER CONCEPT TO COLLEGES

My reactions address concern at the college level. I'd like first to amend the statement describing this program so that it reads "to relate the educational media selection center concept to the needs and behavior patterns of academic libraries and their faculty members, students and librarians, particularly those serving teacher education". For the purpose of this discussion, I consider colleges as those institutions primarily interested in four-year undergraduate education which also may offer a degree no higher than the Master's. Colleges are involved in teacher education in varying degrees, some not at all, but all colleges are users or potential users of educational media.

Many strictly traditional liberal arts colleges offer no teacher education programs or courses and have no plans to change curricula or approach because of basic legitimate and strong institutional philosophy. But they may change and so their potential needs should be considered with those in the next two groups.

There also are liberal arts colleges with no teacher education program, but with a commitment to change curricula and methods of instruction. This means careful planning and redesign of courses and teaching methods which often includes some use of recorded and/or filmed materials as well as printed information resources. This group has a need for assistance in identifying and evaluating already commercially available materials in all formats and packaging as well as a need for a way to identify existing non-

commercial programs on other campuses that could be shared. Much "reinvention of the wheel" activity already is taking place by faculty members who sincerely believe materials or programs prepared or produced by another cannot quite satisfy their particular course requirements. If this is not a deterrant and a faculty member is willing to use a program or package designed or prepared elsewhere, there is presently no means of identifying or learning if one exists except by casual word of mouth or serendipity. I have just learned that the National Institute of Education is considering how it might work with the Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) System to include such identification as part of ERIC's responsibility. The idea of creating instructional materials can be terribly threatening and discouraging, especially where no professional or technical assistance is available, which is the case at all but a few colleges. The result: frequently change is barely change, but more like "directed independent study" based on the use of print resources only.

Third to consider are colleges with teacher education programs. These are really not all that different from liberal arts colleges despite the fact that many have evolved from normal schools. Here, newer and younger faculty members are particularly eager, as are some administrators, to transform and upgrade the institutional image for more favorable comparison with liberal arts colleges. The result is that the teacher education component tends to be overshadowed with an increasingly smaller proportion of institutional commitment devoted to it. In a recent study I conducted, I found only four institutions among 424 colleges enrolling between 1,000 and 3,000 undergraduate students which are still over 50 per cent oriented to teacher education.

Institutions with any size teacher education program do have a responsibility which liberal arts institutions do not to demonstrate not only in the school of education or department, but throughout the entire institution the legitimacy of all kinds of teaching methodology and information resources useful in course preparation, in the classroom, in individual instructional packages, as research sources citable in term papers, etc. It surely is hollow for students to be told in education methods or curriculum planning courses how and why to use materials in a wide range of formats if the use of such media is never demonstrated in on-campus teaching, or is limited to a few "laboratory" classes in education courses. Furthermore, the educational atmosphere that students have been nurtered in prior to college has already included use of these materials and so they are readily received by students who may be more critical and sophisticated in their evaluations and reactions than faculty members.

On these campuses there must be an educational media selection center, really the curriculum laboratory expanded, which serves the needs of persons who expect to teach and those who are teaching them how to become teachers. The Institution should not rely on centers serving area schools but the two centers should be complementary, each with its own special purpose. The needs of college faculty and students are too immediate and demands too heavy to make it practical for them to be served except locally in-house. Service normally should include how to select and evaluate materials, taught as part of education courses by faculty and librarians in their contacts with students. Let us hope that the curriculum laboratory, or Educational Materials

Center, is a vital, active hub of the education department and that it is located within the main library so that it truly is part of the campus intellectual center. Materials for grades K-12 usually will be available in this center, but we must not forget for a minute that every item in the library in all media formats is an educational material whether located in the center or not. This center, depending upon its geographic location and the availability of other centers, should provide assistance to whatever extent desirable and possible to teachers in area schools. Such assistance should include space for examination of materials, access to an evaluation file, encouragement to students and teachers to contribute to the evaluation file, and guidance in using and selecting materials for special projects, such as redesigning a particular curriculum within a school or district. It is essential that a person knowledgable about both the contents of the center and in-school needs be in charge of the center.

I think the answer to the question "Do colleges need assistance in selecting educational media" is obviously and emphatically "YES". How this is to be accomplished is not as clear. Perhaps a clearinghouse which would provide abstracts and direct users to individual developers on other campuses might be included in the National Laboratory System proposed by the Executive and Advisory Committees of the National Book Committee's Educational Media Selection Center Programs as described in the Guide to the Development of Educational Media Selection Centers. Or such a service may become one more area of responsibility for ERIC in conjunction with N.I.E. as mentioned earlier, an approach which has the support of the A.C.R.L. Audio-Visual Committee. Such a plan need not require contributors to provide

actual programs, but instead would function as a referal or switching center. Otherwise, all sorts of ownership and copyright problems would surface, which would likely be deterrants to the whole idea of sharing.

Educational media selection centers patterned on the Pennsylvania model described by Elizabeth Hofmann earlier today, and in the report just mentioned, are probably not the complete answer for colleges as we all know how difficult it is to pin faculty down to review or preview a specific item or on a regular, continuing basis. If faculty members find it hard to find time to walk a few blocks to the library, it does seem somewhat unrealistic to expect that in significant numbers they will drive miles to a center especially if they entertain doubts regarding the intellectual and academic appropriateness of media. A clear responsibility the National Laboratory System should assume is the establishment and promotion of good selection and evaluation criteria for faculty members, educational administrators, public school teachers and librarians along with the already stated goal of in-service training.

It seems very desirable that local or regional educational media selection centers, forming part of the National Laboratory System, be located in colleges with teacher education components building on and expanding existing curriculum laboratories with their more limited purpose and of course with financial assistance. The proposed network of centers -- the National Laboratory System (NLS) -- is a most exciting prospect and one that should provide enormous assistance to colleges in or out of the network and help them to provide educational leadership, rather than finding themselves in the position of followers of developments in elementary and secondary schools.

Since colleges have come to rely on the cataloging service of the Library of Congress, but find cataloging of non-print materials to be of low priority with less space and staff than needed to provide prompt and complete service, the prospect of the National Laboratory System assuming responsibility for this should be very seriously considered. Cataloging these materials is frightening to many people, and it is without question the most expensive kind of cataloging and processing. Without full and accurate cataloging, following nationally accepted standards storage and use of non-print materials in any center or library cannot realize its full potential. But the national centers charged with cataloging must rely on Library of Congress leadership, follow MARC format and produce data compatible in every respect with existing library computer storage and retreival networks, especially Ohio College Library Center (OCLC) with which more and more academic libraries are connected daily. If any thoughts of unique standards or cataloging rules exists, or operating as an entity completely independent of the Library of Congress, let them be immediately abandoned.

The original study launched by the National Book Committee in 1968 preceded much activity within colleges in the area of development of educational materials centers. If some college centers are to be selected to serve as local or regional centers within the network system, it seems that a new study should be made to locate viable centers today and not rely on the 1968-69 data. In the past six years, institutions and libraries have changed enormously, especially in the area of teacher education and increased emphasis on the use of non-print materials. Plans for the National Laboratory System must reflect this change and I hope it will be feasible to make such a

study before proceeding to establish centers. But the need for the system is real and urgent and should not be delayed.